Manufacture of Food-Grade Jute Bags From Rice Bran Oil

4090. DR. A. K. PATEL : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Indian Jute Industries Research Association has developed a special technology based on Rice Bran Oil to manufacture Food-Grade Jute Bags for packaging edible items;

(b) if so, whether it is a fact that only 17 out of 70 Jute Mills have the facility to use Rice Bran Oil to produce Food-Grade Jute bags; and

(c) the measures Government propose to take to ensure that only Food-Grade Bags are manufactured as bags supplied for packing edible items for the domestic market at present are totally Non-Food-Grade ?

THE MINISTER OF STATES IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI V. DHANANJAY KUMAR) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) "Foodgrade" is a commercial term used for "hydrocarbon free" jute bags developed specifically for packaging coffee, cocoa and shelled nuts to meet the specific requirements of these industries. Jute bags with prescribed quantity of Jute Batching Oil (JBO) are internationally used and are actively traded. Jute packaging materials used in India conform to relevant BIS standards which is the designated body in India to set such standards. A.Twill/B. Twill bags used in India conform to the BIS specification which provides a maximum of 8% oil contents. However, Ministry of Environment and Forests has notified permitting use of 3% Non-halogenated hydrocarbons in manufacture of "ECOMARK" Hessian and Sackings. The Jute Industry has been directed to restrict the use of JBO to maximum 3% in manufacture of Hessian and Sackings.

Non-Food-Grade Bags

4091. MISS MABEL REBELLO : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Non-Food-Grade Bags, which are health hazardous are being supplied by the Jute Manufacturers for packaging edible items for domestic consumption; and

(b) if so, whether Government propose to stop such hazardous practice, which will have far-reaching consequences on the Indian populace, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI V. DHANANJAY KUMAR) : (a) and (b) No, Sir. "Foodgrade" is a commercial term used for "hydrocarbon free" jute bags developed specifically for packaging coffee, cocoa and shelled nuts to meet the specific requirements of these industries. Jute bags contain prescribed quantity of JBO and are internationally used and actively traded, Ministry of Environment and Forests has notified permitting use of 3% Non-halogenated hydrocarbons in manufacture of ECOMARK hessian and sackings. "Foodgrade" jute bags are only used for packing of coffee, cocoa and shelled nuts in selected international markets. Jute mills have, however, been instructed to restrict the use of JBO upto maximum of 3%.

Sickness in industrial units engaged in trade and making of ready made garments

†4092. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been an increase in sickness in the industrial units engaged in the trade and making of ready-made garments under the Textile Industry over the last few years;

(b) if so, the percentage-wise increase in sickness estimated in the year 1998-99, 1999-2000 and 2000-2001; and

(c) the number of units which were closed down in the first three months of the year 2001-2002 ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI V. DHANANJAY KUMAR) : (a) to (c) As per latest information available from Reserve Bank of India, the numbers of sick SSI units in the textile industry including garment units at the end of March, 1998, 1999 and 2000 were 11065, 24306 and 25764 respectively. There are no reports from the industry or trade regarding increased closure of garment units.

Export Promotion Councils

4093. SHRI M. RAJASEKARA MURTHY : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) the role of Export Promotion Councils in export promotion efforts of India;

(b) the list of the Export Promotion Councils under administrative control of the Ministry of Textiles;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.